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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

4 April 1968

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EE Reaction to Hanoi's Statement

Most Communist news media in Eastern Europe predictably view Hanoi's qualified willingness to talk with US officials as a reflection of the reasonableness of the North Vietnamese government.

Reaction thus far ranges from East German media characterizing the DRV's statement as a "generous gesture of an injured party" to factual coverage by Yugoslav and Rumanian press agencies. Polish and East German news sources carefully stress that the talks will deal only with negotiating the unconditional cessation of the bombing against North Vietnam so that subsequently peace negotiations can open. Polish and East German media additionally stress that the entire onus for successful talks rests on Washington.

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As of 0830 EDT, neither Czechoslovak nor Hungarian media had reacted to yesterday's statement by Hanoi.

Effects of Polish Crisis on Polish-US Relations

Uncertainty and fear over imminent changes in personnel and possibly in policy is hampering working level relations, and forestalling routine agreement on projects already in train, but no basic change from the already cool climate of pre-crisis relations is yet apparent.

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The Poles also recently have denied permission for a 20,000 issue overrun of USIA's Polish language magazine Ameryka, which is being distributed in Poland reciprocally to the distribution of the periodical Poland in the US. The normal monthly run of the eagerly sought-after Ameryka is 32,000, while Poland's circulation has never topped 10,000.

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East Germans Resist Referendum Drive

The party continues to encounter opposition to its massive drive to gain popular support for the referendum on the new draft constitution. Most church leaders continue to hold out against the new draft which is vague and ambiguous on the question of religious freedom. Some citizens have tried to use the referendum as a vehicle for "black-mailing" the regime into recognizing a number of complaints and social ills.

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COMMENT:

the situation is neither better nor worse than in past elections, the present referendum campaign seems to be generating a good deal more negative reaction.

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The campaign will probably reach a higher phase today when Walter Ulbricht delivers a nationwide address on television on the subject of the referendum.

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Prague Reinvestigates 1948 Death of Foreign Minister Masaryk

The State Prosecutor's Office has announced that it will reopen the case of Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk, who fell to his death from a third-floor window in the foreign ministry in 1948. At that time the Communist regime reported that Masaryk--the son of Czechoslovakia's founder Thomas G. Masaryk--had committed suicide. The reinvestigation was announced by Deputy Prosecutor General Frantisek Zabransky, who was apparently responding to widespread public demands.

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COMMENT: Public belief that Masaryk was murdered is based on the mysterious circumstances of his death as well as a prior attempt on his life; six months earlier he had received a package marked "perfume," but which contained explosives. Masaryk was at that time a colleague of then defense minister Svoboda who was recently elected President.

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Kapo's Influence Reportedly on the Increase

Albanian Politburo member Hysni Kapo's influence appears to be on the increase, according to a source with good

Kapo is being groomed as Party 1st Secretary Hoxha's successor when he retires or resigns.

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COMMENT: Kapo probably ranks third in the Albanian hierarchy after Hoxha and Shehu, and is undoubtedly the logical successor to the Party 1st Secretary. Hoxha, however, has given no indication that he intends to retire or resign in the near future.

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